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LET'S VISIT A NATIONAL FOREST  
Monongahela--West Virginia

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A discussion between John Baker, Radio Service, and Elizabeth Pitt, Forest Service, broadcast Friday, June 2, 1939, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home program, by the National Broadcasting Company and a network of 104 associate radio stations.

BAKER:

Well, the summer vacation season has rolled around again, and a lot of us have been looking longingly at travel posters, Chamber of Commerce pamphlets, and road maps. . .but a lot of us are too busy to take vacations any time we want to. The other day I mentioned to our friend Betsy Pitt of the Forest Service that I was afraid I might not be able to take a vacation this season, and she made a suggestion that sounded very good to me. Betsy, will you tell us about that vacation idea you have?

PITT:

Glad to, John.

BAKER:

I thought our listeners would like to hear about it, since they can take a part in it, too.

PITT:

Absolutely. . .that's the best part of the whole plan.

BAKER:

All right. . .fire away.

PITT:

Well, this is the idea. . .since we can't get away for our vacation now, why not pretend we're taking a motor tour of some of our National Forests. We can simply hop in our imaginary car. . .and visit any National Forest we choose.

BAKER:

And we'll invite all our listeners to pile in and go with us. Let's go. . .after you, Betsy!

PITT:

Thank you, John.

(CAR DOOR CLOSES)

Now which National Forest would you like to visit?

BAKER:

Well, let me see. . .uh. . .how about the Monongahela in West Virginia?

PITT:

The Monongahela National Forest? You can't go wrong on that. The Allegheny Mountains are beautiful over there. . .and it's easy to get to. . .just south of Transcontinental Highway 50.

(over)

BAKER:

All right. . . hold tight. Here we go!  
(START MOTOR, SHIFT GEARS, FADE UP)

PITT:

Slow down, John. We want to see Blackwater Falls.  
(MOTOR EFFECT UNDER)

BAKER:

Oh, this is the Blackwater Gorge!  
(FADE IN WATERFALL)

PITT:

Yes, it's famous all through this part of the country. The Gorge extends/for  
two or three miles. . .isn't it beautiful? west

BAKER:

Look at that rhododendron over there. . .say, this is magnificent! I'll  
stack this against any scenery in the country.

PITT:

You'll find a lot of waterfalls and gorges in the Eastern mountain ranges. . .  
but this is among the best. If we travelled a little farther west, we'd come to  
Parsons. . .the Forest Service has a big nursery there.

BAKER:

Can anyone visit it?

PITT:

Yes, glad to have them. The timber was pretty well gone when the Forest  
Service took over, and a lot of planting had to be done on cut-over and burned-over  
land, so they started the nursery. The Forest Supervisor, Mr. Wood, has his head-  
quarters at Elkins. . .that's on over beyond Parsons.

BAKER:

That's where they have the big Forest Festival every year, isn't it?

PITT:

Yes. . .it's one of the big annual events in West Virginia. . .they have a  
colorful pageant and select a Queen of the Forests.

BAKER:

Well, if we are going to see much more of this National Forest, we'll have to  
get under way.

(MOTOR UP)

PITT:

Let's slow down a little, John. This is Beaverdam Game Refuge.

(MOTOR UNDER)

BAKER:

Game refuge. . .we certainly don't want to miss that. . .this must be good  
fish and game country.

PITT:

In the old days they had about everything. . .deer, bear, squirrels, rabbits, coons, foxes. . .under the protection they get now, they are all coming back.

BAKER:

Are there any wild turkeys?

PITT:

Quite a few, and also grouse and quail.

BAKER:

I notice some beautiful fishing streams as we came along.

PITT:

Yes. . .this National Forest is famous for its fishing streams. . .mostly trout and bass. . .our fish management program has helped to improve the fishing a great deal. But don't let's get off on the fishing. . .if we expect to see much more.

(MOTOR UP)

BAKER:

We must be pretty high. . .my ears feel funny.

(MOTOR FADES)

PITT:

That's to be expected. . .we're on the highest mountain in West Virginia.

(FADE IN WIND IN TREES)

BAKER:

Spruce Knob?

PITT:

Right. . .it's 4,860 feet high. A lot of important rivers rise right around here. That's really why the Monongahela National Forest was established. . .engineers said if the forest cover was brought back to these mountains, it would help control the flood situation in this part of the country.

BAKER:

Well, I suppose the Potomac is one of the important rivers, isn't it?

PITT:

Yes. . .and the Ohio, the Little Kanawha, and the Monongahela. . .you could also include the James River and the Greenbrier. . .they are dependent on this drainage.

BAKER:

Betsy, where is Seneca Rock from here?

PITT:

Over there to the north. . .not so far. The Rock is an enormous cliff about 8 or 9 hundred feet above the Potomac River. There are a lot of interesting landmarks to be pointed out from here. . .but I want you to see the Blue Bend Forest Camp, so let's go. There are half a dozen excellent camps in this National Forest, but I know Blue Bend better than the others.

BAKER:

All right. . . I'd like to see Blue Bend Forest Camp.  
(MOTOR UP)

PITT:

Look at the tents over there in the camping space!

BAKER:

Say, this camp is a bezuty. Let's get out and have a look at it.  
(MOTOR STOPS: CAR DOOR OPENS)

PITT:

Why, I didn't expect to find so many campers here this early.

BAKER:

I should think you'd find campers here all the time. . . there aren't any charges for using these forest camps are, there?

PITT:

No, there are no charges. . . everybody's welcome, if they obey the rules of the woods. . . clean up your camp and don't start any forest fires. That's Anthony Creek over there. . . the swimming is grand.

BAKER:

Are those bathhouses?

PITT:

Yes, they are bathhouses. Let's go over there where that man's cooking steak . . . isn't that a good fireplace?

BAKER:

Uhuh. . . say, that fellow doesn't know how to handle that steak. He's doing it all wrong. . .

PITT:

Let's go this way, John. If you get your hands on that steak, we'd never get away from here. Every man thinks he's the only man who knows how to cook a really good steak over a campfire.

BAKER:

I've broiled many a steak in my day.

PITT:

Oh, look, John! Isn't that log shelter over there attractive?

BAKER:

I should say so. . . what's it used for?

PITT:

Shelter in case of rain. . . and campfire gatherings when the evenings are cool.

BAKER:

Did the CCC boys build it. . .

PITT:

Yes. . .these benches out front here are a good idea. . . isn't the view beautiful? I'm going to sit down and enjoy it a minute.

BAKER:

Me, too.

PITT:

We can stand a little rest. . .we've covered a lot of territory. . .  
The Monongahela National Forest is about 125 miles long.

BAKER:

This section of the country has an interesting historical background.

PITT:

Yes. . .I always liked to hear about the early explorers coming over here from the colonies. . .and the early settlers and their troubles with the Indians. The old Seneca Warpath wanders all around through the northern end of the National Forest.

BAKER:

White Sulphur Springs is just down below here, isn't it?

PITT:

Yes. . .but we've got to be getting back, John.

BAKER:

Yes. . .even imaginary vacation trips have to end on time.

PITT: (FADING)

That's right. . .

BAKER:

(FADING)

The car isn't far. . .come on.

PITT:

Coming.

(MOTOR UP AND OUT)

BAKER:

Farm and Home Friends, you have been listening to a description of an imaginary visit to the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia. In addition to producing timber, protecting watersheds, furnishing a home for wildlife, and providing employment, our 158 National Forests are widely used for recreation. If you would like to know more about these National Forest playgrounds, write to the Forest Service, Washington, D. C., and ask for the leaflet on recreation. If you are going to the San Francisco Fair or the New York Fair, stop along the way and visit a National Forest. The recreation leaflet will tell you where they are and give you an idea of what you may expect to find in each one. Send your postcard to the Forest Service, Washington, D. C., and ask for the leaflet on recreation.

